




**Global Atlantic**  
FINANCIAL GROUP

*Thinking Ahead*

# Burial Benefits for U.S. Veterans





*This guide includes helpful information regarding burial benefits authorized by the Veterans Administration.*

★ **BENEFITS**

A listing of benefits available to those who are eligible.

★ **ELIGIBILITY**

Terms and conditions for veterans, spouses, ex-spouses, and families.

★ **FILING**

A guide to compiling all the necessary forms and documents.

★ **SERVICES**

Important information to have available for your family at the time of your service.

# BENEFITS

## *Veterans Administration burial benefits*

### **FREE BURIAL**

Veterans, service members, spouses and eligible dependents may be buried in national and state cemeteries. This includes the gravesite, opening and closing of the grave, marker, government grave liner and perpetual care. There may be a minimal charge for the interment of a veteran's eligible immediate family member for the opening and closing of the grave. Many national and state cemeteries have special arrangements for cremated remains as well. These arrangements are coordinated through your funeral professional.

### **FREE HEADSTONES AND MARKERS**

Upon request, Veterans Affairs (VA) provides, at no charge, a headstone or marker to eligible veterans who are buried in national, state veteran, military post/base or private cemeteries around the world. The markers and headstones are also provided for eligible spouses and dependents, except when buried in a private cemetery. The style chosen must be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Niche markers are available to mark columbaria used for cremated remains.

# BENEFITS

## **MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS**

Upon request, the Department of Defense will provide military funeral honors for the burial of military members and eligible veterans. The basic ceremony consists of the folding and presentation of the United States flag and the playing of Taps by a bugler, if available, or by electronic recording. Family members should inform their funeral director if they desire military funeral honors for a veteran.

## **FREE UNITED STATES FLAG**

Veterans Benefits Administration provides a United States flag to drape on the casket or accompany the urn of a veteran or retiree who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces. Afterwards, the flag may be presented to the next of kin or a close associate of the deceased. This benefit applies only to veterans.

## **FREE PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATE**

An engraved paper certificate with the veteran's name, signed by the current President is issued to next-of-kin to express the nation's recognition of the veteran's service and honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans.

## REIMBURSEMENT OF BURIAL EXPENSE

### Service-Connected Death

The maximum service-connected burial allowance is \$2,000. If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, VA may reimburse some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased veteran's remains.

### Non-Service-Connected Death

The VA will pay a \$300 burial allowance and \$762 for a plot. There are higher non-service-connected death rates payable if the veteran was hospitalized by the VA when he or she died.

## FREE BURIAL AT SEA

This is a means of final disposition of remains that is performed on United States Navy vessels.

The committal ceremony is performed while the ship is deployed; therefore, family members are not allowed to be present. Active duty members, retirees, veterans (who were honorably discharged), U.S. civilian marine personnel of the Military Sealift Command and dependent family members of active duty personnel, are eligible for this ceremony at the following embarkation ports:

- |                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| ★ Norfolk, VA        | ★ San Diego, CA |
| ★ Jacksonville, FL   | ★ Bremerton, WA |
| ★ Corpus Christi, TX | ★ Honolulu, HI  |

# ELIGIBILITY

## *Determining eligibility*

### **VETERANS**

Any member of the U.S. Armed Forces who dies on active duty or was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and has completed the required period of service is automatically eligible. Department of Veterans Affairs has the primary responsibility for verifying eligibility: [va.gov](http://va.gov) or (800) 827-1000.

### **SPOUSES**

The surviving spouse of an eligible veteran is also eligible with certain restrictions on subsequent marriages. Call the number above or visit the following web site at [cem.va.gov](http://cem.va.gov).

### **CHILDREN**

Unmarried, minor children who are under the age of 21 (age is extended to 23 for children enrolled in an approved educational institution) and of an eligible veteran or active duty member of the armed forces are eligible. An adult child who is incapable of self-support due to a permanent disability sustained prior to reaching age 21 may also be eligible.

## **BURIAL AT SEA**

Eligibility for this benefit extends to active duty members, veterans discharged under honorable conditions, U.S. civilian marine personnel of the Military Sealift Command and dependents, family members of active duty personnel, retirees and veterans of the uniformed services.

## **REIMBURSEMENT**

This applies to all veterans who died due to a service-related disability, were in receipt of VA pension or compensation at the time of death, or were entitled to receive VA pension or compensation but decided not to reduce their military retirement or disability pay. Also, if the veteran died in a VA hospital or while in a nursing home under VA contract, they are eligible. Claims must be filed within two years after permanent burial or cremation.

Note: Let a Person Authorized to Direct Disposition (PADD) or local funeral director, help with any burial request in national and state veteran cemeteries.

# FILING

## *Preparing to file*

### **VETERANS BURIAL BENEFITS**

Information you need to make available prior to filing for benefits:

- ★ Proof of the veteran's military service (DD214) (i.e. enlisted record of separation, discharge documents, or retirement orders)
- ★ Certified copy of Death Certificate
- ★ Certified copy of original Marriage Certificate
- ★ Copies of paid funeral, burial, and cemetery receipts
- ★ Copies of paid hospital and doctor bills incurred by last illness, if applicable
- ★ Verification of amount of life insurance you will receive as a result of veteran's death
- ★ Social Security number of veteran's spouse or dependents, if applicable

When you are ready to file for burial benefits, contact your local Veterans Affairs office by calling **(800) 827-1000**.

Note: Do not send original documents, as they are not returned.



## OTHER DOCUMENTATION MAY APPLY TO YOU

- ★ **Previous marriage:** If you or the veteran were previously married, you will also need a certified copy of Divorce Decree or a Death Certificate to prove the previous or subsequent marriage was dissolved by divorce or death.
- ★ **Dependent children:** You need a certified copy of Birth Certificates for all children under 18. For children over 18 and still in school up to age 23, you need a Birth Certificate and a copy of VA Form 21-674.
- ★ **Social Security:** If either of you currently receive Social Security benefits, you will need to know the exact amount received for each of you.
- ★ **VA claim number:** If you already have a VA claim number, you must furnish that number to the VA.
- ★ **Additional income:** If either of you receive additional income, the sources and exact amounts must be reported to the VA.

Note: If you qualify for Social Security benefits, go to the Social Security office or the web site, before going to the Veterans Administration office. ([ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov))

# SERVICES

## *Complete burial services*

National cemeteries do not reserve space or make advanced arrangements. For this reason, it is a good idea to have written instructions prepared so that important benefits are not overlooked.

Veterans' service organizations or volunteer groups in the area often provide military honors and services. It is important for your family to be aware of these possible benefits and your desire to have military funeral honors at your funeral. Be sure you have copies of discharge papers as a part of your other important documents available to give to the funeral director when arrangements are being made. These professionals will arrange the services as requested. Furthermore, the Department of Defense maintains a toll-free telephone line (877) MIL-HONR for use by funeral directors to request honors.

Visit the military funeral honors web page at [militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil](http://militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil) for more information.



Note: The VA provides many benefits if you use a national or state veteran cemetery. The VA does not provide the funeral services and materials involved in preparing for burial.

Information obtained from [cem.va.gov/cem](https://cem.va.gov/cem)



[\*globalatlantic.com\*](https://globalatlantic.com)

Global Atlantic Financial Group (Global Atlantic) is the marketing name for Global Atlantic Financial Group Limited and its subsidiaries, including Forethought Life Insurance Company and Accordia Life and Annuity Company. Each subsidiary is responsible for its own financial and contractual obligations.